



MIZZOU

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Alumni Profile

When Harry met Mabel

As a star for the University of Southern California and the Detroit Lions, Harry Smith flattened snarling, gargantuan linemen throughout his gridiron career. But it was a petite gal from Bardstown, Ky., who sacked the All-American guard in 1941.

Harry was a young assistant to Coach Don Faurot when he stopped by the practice field and spotted Mabel nearby. Struck by the thunderbolt, he asked some friends about her.

“The next week, she came by my office in Rothwell Gymnasium. I asked her for a date, and she said she had one,” says Harry, M Ed ’69. “I asked her again later, and she said she had one. The third time, we had a date, and we got married in six months.”

Alternate content

They tied the knot at Faurot’s modest three-bedroom home on Virginia Avenue. After a luncheon, the newlyweds headed to Kansas City, Mo., where Harry helped the coach at a Tiger track meet.

“That night, we stayed at the Muehlebach Hotel for our honeymoon,” Mabel says, smiling. “You were nobody unless you stayed at the Muehlebach.”

The Smiths celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary Feb. 27, 2012, at The Bluffs nursing home in Columbia. Harry, 93, is a resident, and Mabel, 92, visits almost daily. They once listed traveling as their favorite hobby, when Harry’s coaching career and Chevrolet convertible took them all over North America.

The Smiths tend to stay put these days, supporting Tiger athletics, keeping in touch with their offspring, holding hands and reminiscing.

“He’s very sentimental, humble and easy to get along with,” says Mabel, BA ’42, BS Ed ’64. As

for advice, she says it is important for each partner to have a life and a circle of friends outside of marriage. Harry, however, gives all the credit to his “angelic” wife.

“We have a lot of fun together,” says Harry, laughing. “She’s the best wife I’ve ever had.” — *Marcus Wilkins*

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